

The Dark

# The Dark

By : Will Neill

Childiish fears return to haunt a man after his Mothers death from Cancer.



Published on  
**Booksie**

[booksie.com/Will Neill](http://booksie.com/Will%20Neill)

Copyright © Will Neill, 2015  
**Publish your writing on Booksie.com.**

# The Dark

## The Dark

A short story by Will Neill

I can always remember that sliver of light that shone under the gap at the bottom of my bedroom door, when you are a four year old boy itâs your life line to the outside world as you lie alone in your bed surrounded by darkness that little strip of radiance seemed to keep me safe, like a magical force field it wards off monsters and demons who lurk on the other side. If I could fall asleep while itâs there Iâd be safe till morning, if not an endless night of fear and dread lay ahead, every sound and movement from beyond the door was amplified into a ghostly wail or a monsters foot steps by my imagination.

Sometimes I would try and force my self to sleep before I could hear my mothers footstepâs on the landing out side, once I saw the shadow of her feet moving across my mystical glow I knew all was lost as seconds later my world would be darkness, with the flick of a switch I would be transported into a domain of panic and fright.

Of course nothing ever happened, I never was whisked away by some headless creature with wings, nor had my hair turned white with fright by a phantom floating above my bed.

But sometimes even now that Iâm 35 I still ponder, was I sleeping on those occasions when the creature and the phantom came and I just didnât see them, but a vigorous shake of my head usually dispels such nonsense, I would whisper to my self â Thereâs no such things as ghosts or monstersâ . I still sleep with the landing light on even now, its not something I would admit to if asked, but then again who would- every one has their little secrets.

I stayed with my Mum up until she died last spring â The Big Câ they called it, ate away at her for nearly two years, I remember Doctor Warrington up at the City hospital pulling me to one side the day they diagnosed her â John Iâve got some bad newsâ he said not looking me straight in the eyes but letting his gaze fall on the floor â Your Mumâs got Cancer-The Big C itâs in her lungâ sâ â *Look at me!* I kept screaming in my head as his words drifted off into a blur â *Why wonât you look at me!*â his eyes never left the ground.

Was that for his benefit or mine? â Can any thing be doneâ I asked, anxiously waiting for a delayed smile and a word of reassurance or hope

## The Dark

He didn't smile or shift his stare before he spoke again "we can try chemotherapy and radiation treatment, what do you think?" "What do I think, what do I think! He's the expert not me, why should I make the decisions, my mind was racing.

"Whatever it takes doctor" automatically emanated from my mouth like some line from a day time soap opera, but the credits didn't begin to roll or picture fade to end this was real life.

It was then I became aware of the smell in the room, it seemed to linger below all the usual hospital odors that you expect, sterile disinfectant air mixed with body sweat and overbearing canned fresh fragrance, it was familiar. I had smelt it before a long time ago. It was the day my mother brought me to visit her sister who had died two days previous, I was six years old and overwhelmed at the attention I was receiving from all these strangers dressed in black attire, the house was filled with cigarette smoke and lavender perfume, conversations drifted between clusters of people standing around in selected islands reminiscing about the poor deceased that brought the occasional burst of laughter or the sporadic rupture of tears brought on by a word or forgotten memory. I held my Mother's hand tight as we weaved our way through the canals of space between each little group towards the coffin resting on black metal square legs that sat centre of the dimly lit living room, its rim falling level with my eye line. I could feel mum's grip get stronger the closer we got, then her pace slowed. A muted sob fell from behind her black veiled face and a whisper of her sister's name floated in the air as we stopped beside the casket, without wavering she reached out and laid her hands on my Aunt's forehead stroked back her auburn hair and began to cry, I knew I should be sad, but my tears didn't come.

"Touch her John" Mother said looking down at me with red eyes "Lay your hand on hers Aunt Emily would like that" for a moment I hesitated, then reached over the casket's rim

letting my hand hover briefly before resting it on her crossed palms. I had never felt such cold, a coldness that seemed to flow into me, and the air, it felt heavy and still.

She didn't look old; her face was smooth like an alabaster doll, painted on rouge cheeks and a smile reminiscent of the Mona Lisa's portrait. I looked to her chest to see it rise and fall like a person who sleeps, but it was still like the atmosphere that surrounded us, an invisible bubble, and an ambiance of death. It was inside this stillness that maybe only a six year old can detect, an aroma, a sense long forgotten as you cruise along the sea of life- where the fog of mortality creeps up from behind encapsulating you before you reach your destination.

It was there again in my Mother's hospital room, even though I tried to listen to the Doctor's comforting words they swirled around me lost in the mist of anxiety and of a future alone. The treatment didn't work, needless to say if any thing it just prolonged her agony, in the end I was glad when she died not for me but for her, that's the problem we don't cry for the dead we cry for ourselves- a selfish emotion.

All those nights as a boy I lay in the dark frightened of the headless creature and the ghostly phantoms that may cross my threshold and scare me to death I realize now were figments of a childish imagination, the real monsters and demons plant their seeds at the moment we are born.

The devil is time and the Monster is disease and some  
times, only

Some times do we find our sliver of light, our magical force field that helps protect us for a while before we hear the footsteps on the landing that come to turn off the light.

Copy right Will O' Neill October 2006

## The Dark

## The Dark

## The Dark

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2015-01-29 09:46:36